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NEWS RELEASE

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Commissioner Blatchford Announces New Director of Community Advocacy

(Anchorage) – The State of Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development today announced the appointment of Michael Black as the new Director of the Division of Community Advocacy. Mr. Black currently serves as the Division's Chief of Field Services.

"Michael comes to us with 24 years of experience in state government where he has worked within the department on a number of high level issues," said Commissioner Edgar Blatchford. "He has the expertise and work experience essential for the position."

Most recently, Mr. Black has been instrumental in working with the Office of the Governor and the Denali Commission to develop a bridge loan program created in response to rural fuel shortages.

He currently oversees the Division's grant programs, the local government assistance program, the Municipal Land Trust program, and the Rural Utilities Business Advisory program. Formerly, he served as the Research and Policy Analyst for North Carolina's Office of Coastal Management. Mr. Black was responsible for the development of the North Carolina Wetland Development Plan and participated in the creation of the North Carolina Coastal management program.

Mr. Black has a Bachelors Degree in Business Administration from Ohio University and a Masters in Forestry from Duke University. He will assume his new duties on September 14, 2004.

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